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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FORTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 20 November 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal)
(Vice-President)

- The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives [28]

  (a) Report of the Secretary-General

  (b) Draft resolution

- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [18] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

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(b) Report of the Secretary-General

(c) Draft resolutions

(d) Draft decision

(e) Report of the Fifth Committee

In the absence of the President Mrs. Diallo (Senegal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 28

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND PEACE INITIATIVES

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/706)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/45/L.19)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call upon the representative of Honduras, who will introduce draft resolution A/45/L.19 in the course of his statement.

Mr. FLORES BERMUDEZ (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): It is a pleasure for me, on behalf of the Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and my own country, to express our pleasure that at this forty-fifth session of the General Assembly our proceedings are being conducted under the skilful presidency of Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta. His personal qualities and merits have made it clear that this session of the General Assembly will be able to conclude its work with the required success.

The situation in Central America was put on the General Assembly's agenda following the serious political and security crisis that struck the region during the 1980s. The international community has given its determined support to the regional peace process and fully identified itself with the peaceful settlement of the crisis.

Initially, the co-operation of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela - the Contadora Group - with the subsequent co-operation of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay as the Support Group, led to an intensification of contacts among Central Americans and made it possible to establish a regional agenda. The next step in

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the process has consisted of meetings between the Presidents of the Central American countries, one of which, on 7 August 1987 at Esquipulas, Guatemala, adopted a procedure for establishing firm and lasting peace in Central America.

The Presidents set up machinery for dealing flexibly with the most severe problems in the political and security fields and made democratization a matter of urgency. National reconciliation commissions were established to ensure that a genuine process of reconciliation was under way, including popular participation with full guarantees of truly democratic processes on the basis of justice, freedom and democracy.

The Central American Foreign Ministers together formed an Executive Commission under the Esquipulas process in order to carry out the mandate of the Presidents; they were supported by working groups and negotiated such agreements as the joint plan for the demobilization, repatriation and voluntary relocation in Nicaragua and third countries of members of the Nicaraguan resistance and their families, as well as plans to assist in the demobilization of all persons involved in armed activities in countries in the region when they voluntarily so requested.

The Security Commission created by the Executive Commission is currently holding consultations in the region on monitoring the limitation and reduction of armaments and troops.

The United Nations has given its firm support to the Central American process and has been an indispensable element in its implementation. Discussion of the subject in the General Assembly and the Security Council has enabled the international community to appreciate the seriousness of the crisis. Resolutions adopted here have given an impetus to the process for resolving the crisis agreed upon by the Central Americans.

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(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

Many statements made during the general debate made reference to the situation in Central America. We have heard words of encouragement from every continent and region. Central America is grateful for this testimony of support for the peace towards which we are all working.

The Secretary-General and the officials he has appointed to co-operate in this peace process have given and continue to provide invaluable services in the regional effort. The United Nations presence has been a timely and important contribution to building confidence in the process. Monitoring by the world Organization of the implementation of the commitments undertaken by the Central American Governments has been indispensable in the achievement of the results witnessed so far.

The complementarity of the United Nations in the working of the machinery now in operation in Central America has had highly satisfactory results. The United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), which has been employed in the region since last December, made it possible to carry out the joint demobilization plan for members of the Nicaraguan resistance until its completion in June of this year. The process of voluntary repatriation of disarmed former fighters has also been successful, save for the voluntary repatriation of a small group of Nicaraguan refugees.

The International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV), which is staffed by the United Nations Secretary-General and the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), has done important work in implementing the plan for the demobilization, repatriation and relocation, which I mentioned earlier. The functions of CIAV include work on a variety of matters, such as good offices, disarming and the custody of arms, and humanitarian and development assistance. The fulfilment of this complex and delicate series of responsibilities

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with the support of ONUCA, has made a very important contribution, particularly on the military area, which was one of the most delicate areas in the process. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also played an extremely important role in the humanitarian area, making available for the plan the infrastructure and logistical arrangements that had been gradually set up in the region since the early 1980s following the massive refugee flows generated by the crisis.

The role of CIAV has not yet been completed. A great deal remains to be done to ensure that repatriation is definitive. The creation and maintenance of conditions conducive to the normalization of the social, political and economic life of those repatriated and the confidence that process must create are fundamental elements in ensuring the programme's success. Although the principal task is being carried out by the Government whose nationals are returning, CIAV support continues to be of major importance for the final reincorporation of those nationals in the development process. Similarly, ONUCA officials continue to be needed.

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Since the elections in Nicaragua in April last, the conclusion in June this year of the process of demobilizing the Nicaraguan resistance was one of the most significant events in the Central American peace process. Among the responsibilities vis-à-vis demobilization that the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) has is to take charge of the arms, matériel and military equipment handed over to it by members of the Nicaraguan resistance, and then to destroy them. ONUCA's responsibilities also include security services within the security zones established for the purposes of demobilization.

We are all aware of the important role played by ONUCA in the process of demobilization. However, ONUCA's participation is not confined to monitoring the cease-fire and the separation of forces in Nicaragua, nor to the demobilization of members of the Nicaraguan resistance or the monitoring of their voluntary repatriation. It can also play an important role in other cases in which, as a result of internal processes of reconciliation, irregular groups decide to lay down their arms and participate in national political processes.

We should not forget that ONUCA's initial mandate has to do with verifying that security undertakings are met; we, the Central American Governments, have given such undertakings in two specific areas: the ending of aid to irregular forces, and the non-use of the territory of the State for attacks on other States. To this end, the daily land, air and sea patrols carried out by ONUCA and its follow-up of complaints of alleged violations are making it possible to maintain a regular and visible presence in those parts of the region which most need it. ONUCA can thus exercise a preventive or deterrent function, as the Secretary-General's report of 11 October 1989 envisaged. By being there, ONUCA is thus also contributing towards promoting a more favourable atmosphere in the region and is at the same time acting as an important political prop to the peace process.

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The Secretary-General's report to the Security Council of 26 October last gives us an extensive account of ONUCA's activities and also of what lies ahead for it; it also recaps the request the Governments of the Central American countries made in their letter of 29 September this year for ONUCA's mandate to be extended for six months. We are therefore gratified by Security Council resolution 675 (1990), adopted on 5 November 1990, whereby, on the basis of the Secretary-General's report, the mandate was extended as requested.

The United Nations presence in the Central American peace process is an extensive one. The negotiations currently being conducted between the Central American Governments in the area of control, limitation and reduction of weapons and forces thus enjoy United Nations participation at the observer level.

Similarly, the United Nations has made substantial contributions in the field of national reconciliation. Thus, at the request of the Government of Nicaragua, an observer group was set up to monitor the Nicaraguan electoral process at each and every stage. ONUVEN, as it is known, carried out functions never before carried out by the Organization on the American continent. Here again, the presence of the United Nations was of the utmost importance for the historic step represented by the the Nicaraguan electoral process.

We can state with satisfaction that a process of rapid change has now begun in Nicaragua. In less than six months the Government of that country has succeeded in bringing about the disarmament of the Nicaraguan resistance, reintegrating it into civilian life. There has been a reduction in the national army to less than 30 per cent of the manpower it had at the end of last year, and this process will be intensified even further in the next few months. A broad and successful programme has been set in train to disarm the civilian population in order to avoid the risk of armed clashes in future. Violence as a way of solving conflicts is

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thus rapidly being rooted out of the country; in this context, specific agreements on the process of economic and social reconciliation in Nicaragua have been reached during this past month of October.

Within this context of national reconciliation, and on the basis of the request made by the Central American Presidents and the mandate for a good offices mission entrusted to the Secretary-General by the Security Council in resolution 637 (1989) of 27 July 1989 - and more specifically at the request of the Government of El Salvador and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) - the Secretary-General's major efforts to solve and terminate the armed conflict in El Salvador by negotiation are coming to a successful conclusion. The negotiation process which has developed, with the participation of the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, has generated new and encouraging expectations about the attainment of the objectives set out in the Geneva agreement of 4 April 1990 and the Caracas agreement of 21 May 1990 between the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN, in particular since the outcome of the talks held at the end of October in Mexico City became known; at those talks, it was decided to strengthen the negotiating process, laying greater stress on the active role of the Secretary-General and his mediation between the parties, and also on the discreet nature of the face-to-face meetings.

These commitments, which reaffirm and strengthen the role of the Secretary-General, will hasten the process towards putting an end to the problem of the armed conflict and its side-effects; it is both necessary and imperative that this problem be solved, not only for the well-being of the people of El Salvador, but also for regional peace and stability. These efforts enjoy the support of the other Central American countries, and therefore merit the support of the whole international community, in particular those countries from outside the region

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that are in a position to provide it, and in so doing, contribute to the cause of peace, consolidation of democracy and respect for human rights in El Salvador.

Similarly, the United Nations is acting as observer in the talks under way between the various segments of Guatemalan society and the armed opposition. These talks have been conducted under the auspices of the national reconciliation commission and with the support of the Government of Guatemala. They began on the basis of the agreement signed on 30 March 1990 in Oslo, Norway, between the national reconciliation commission and the Unidad Revolucionaria National Guatemalteca (URNG). To date, the following meetings have taken place:

A meeting at the request of the political parties of Guatemala and the UNRG in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain, from 27 May to 1 June; at this meeting, the El Escorial agreement was signed;

A meeting of the representatives of the Guatemalan private sector and the URNG, held in Ottawa, Canada, from 31 August to 1 September;

A meeting of the religious sectors of Guatemala and the URNG, held in Quito, Ecuador, from 24 to 26 September; this meeting gave rise to the Quito Declaration;

A meeting of the popular sectors of Guatemala and the URNG, held in Metepec, Puebla, Mexico, from 23 to 25 October; this led to the Metepec Declaration.

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These important meetings made it possible to begin a serious process intended to lead to peace and improve democracy in Guatemala. The participation of an Observer appointed by the Secretary-General has helped to generate a climate of confidence that will facilitate a peaceful solution to the long process of confrontation which has been the lot of Guatemala.

The East-West conflict had a decisive impact on the Central American crisis. The ideological and strategic conflict between the great Powers made itself felt in the region. But, just as the East-West conflict contributed decisively to increasing the elements of confrontation, so the new international order, with the end of the cold war, has contributed to the viability of the plan designed and put into effect by the Presidents of the region.

Today, the international practice is oriented towards the full observance of international law, in particular the peaceful settlement of disputes, as the foundation of relations between States. Through the application of these principles, we Central Americans are taking historic steps to consolidate peace in our region.

Nevertheless, democratic and military progress is not enough. The situation in Central America transcends the political and security objectives and contains essentially social elements which cannot be ignored.

The social consequences of the Central American crisis found expression in the mass mobilization of hundreds of thousands of refugees and many internally displaced persons. The inevitable exacerbation of economic and financial problems had a direct impact on the well-being of the population. The standard of living of Central Americans in general was seriously affected. These are all components of the distressing and tragic picture in Central America.

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While international financial, economic and trade relations in themselves give rise to enormous complications for developing countries, the Central American situation to which I have referred constitutes an additional challenge for the Governments and peoples of Central America.

The Presidents of the region pointed out at the Esquipulas summit meeting in 1987 that the consolidation of democracy involves the creation of a system of welfare and economic and social justice.

In the Assembly a few weeks ago this point was confirmed by Presidents and representatives of Central American Governments when they spoke in the general debate.

In this context, the President of El Salvador pointed out the following:

> "Contrary to all adversity and expectations, democracy is now a functioning reality in all the countries of Central America. But we cannot and must not lose sight of the fact that nascent democracies are fragile and depend to a considerable extent on international understanding and support." (A/45/PV.15, p. 49)

The President of Honduras said:

> "At the meeting in Antigua, Guatemala, the Central American Presidents reiterated their appeal to the international community for the co-operation we need to make our development a reality. This support is particularly important if we are to sustain efforts to relieve the burden of external debt and thus free the resources needed to develop the region." (A/45/PV.12, p. 12)

The President of Nicaragua said:

> "We recognize and accept our responsibility to realize adjustments and transformations which will make our economies viable. However, this effort must be complemented by international co-operation, including preferential treatment. We view international co-operation, not as a substitute for our

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own efforts, but as a necessary additional element to achieve steady development and growing participation in international trade."

(A/45/PV.10, p. 23)

The Foreign Minister of Guatemala pointed out that

"The economic situation throughout the world continues to be adverse to the economic and social development of the developing countries."

(A/45/PV.5, p. 103)

Finally, the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica said:

"We are extremely concerned lest diminishing tension in Central America should entail - as has already happened in some areas - a lessening of interest in our problems and a reduction in co-operation for development in the area. Without international solidarity the Central American nations will be unable to recover even to the levels of development they had reached before the crisis. Without development the democratic will and the desire of Central Americans for lasting peace are at risk." (A/45/PV.5, p. 79)

It is for those reasons that today the subject of integrated, national and joint development is on the Central American agenda with a renewed sense of urgency, and in this the support of the international community has a very important role to play.

In Central America we have embarked upon a difficult process of transition. We are working to move from a polarized, violent society to a united society based on consensus. As part of this process we have given the highest priority to the consolidation of peace and the solution of our immediate, complex social and economic problems. Ultimately, it is a matter of an authentic process of reconstruction, with lasting, stable social peace and an equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of our development adjustment process.

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Even when peace begins to be a reality in Central America, its improvement and consolidation will require sustained progress in the economic and social fields. We have to contain inflation, create job opportunities and embark on a sustained process of economic recovery and growth. This process can be successful only through the active participation of all Central Americans, and it will be to the benefit of all, being broad-based and tending to reduce the profound economic and social disparities. The consolidation of this type of peace, which transcends the end of the war itself, calls for a fundamental change in the political outlook of the whole Central American family.

In this forum of civilization and humanism we urge nations of good will to continue to support the efforts to build a democratic and peaceful Central America. It is time for the moral and material reconstruction of Central America; time to strengthen the pre-eminence of civil society over arms in all countries of the region; time to heal wounds and build bridges of understanding; time to deal with the needs of all social groups; but, above all, it is time to work with dedication and determination in the highest interests of Central America.

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I do not wish to end this statement without reiterating my Government's gratitude to the Secretary-General for the effective and indispensable role of the Organization in general and of his closest colleagues in particular. They are playing under his skilful leadership. Thanks to this role there are better prospects in Central America for the consolidation of peace, democracy and development, which will help to normalize the region.

The points I have made are in keeping with the draft resolution we Central Americans are introducing for the Assembly's consideration, and Brazil and the United States of America have joined the sponsors. Since this is a consensus draft resolution, we propose that it be adopted without a vote.

Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Colombia and Venezuela and my own delegation, members of the Group of Three.

As we embark on the decade of the 1990s, we must bear in mind that it marks the end of 10 years of violence and antagonism in Central America. Indeed, during the 1980s the Central American peoples were the victims of conflict among States of the region. The devastating effects of war and internal conflict took a significant human toll and deprived Central America of the opportunity to overcome its problems of economic and social development.

For a long time - and in spite of intensive efforts in good faith to find a peaceful solution to the conflicts in the Central American isthmus, it was not possible to make dialogue and negotiations prevail over the interests and forces that were fuelling war. This situation threatened to convert Central America into a source of more generalized conflict whose regional consequences would have been devastating.

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

Today, fortunately, we are at the beginning of a new decade which offers the prospect of a period of peace for Central America. No longer do we hear the sound of gunfire, and praiseworthy steps have been taken to establish harmonious regional coexistence in stability and dignity. Similarly, firm steps have been taken towards the consolidation of the processes of national reconciliation, which are still continuing. We are encouraged by the prospect of a new era that will make it possible to focus attention on the processes of reconstruction and development to overcome not only the ravages of the recent conflict but also the old problems of economic and social underdevelopment.

Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico have not remained aloof to the events in Central America. Bilaterally at first, and subsequently within the framework of a regional peace effort, we have sought to help in the search for a comprehensive and lasting diplomatic solution to the disputes that have caused bloodshed in fraternal countries. We have done so in the conviction that regional harmony was one of the most appropriate paths towards the creation of propitious conditions for negotiations.

Today, we continue our support for peace and the development of Central America within the framework of the Rio Group and the Group of Three.

Inspired by a spirit of co-operation to prevent the conflict in the area becoming a major disaster, along with other countries of the region we are seeking to promote the political framework so that the future of Central America can be one of dialogue and not force of arms. At all times, however, we have maintained that the future would depend basically on the decisions of the Central Americans themselves; in the final analysis, they would be the ones to forge the bricks of a genuine, lasting solution to their problems.

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Hence we welcomed wholeheartedly the political will demonstrated with the signing of the "Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America" on 7 August 1987 in Guatemala City. The Esquipulas II Agreement left no doubt that it was up to the Central American peoples to assume the historic responsibility for forging a future of peace. It also demonstrated that only through the exercise of political will by the five Central American Presidents would it be possible to achieve peace.

Esquipulas II made absolutely clear the futility of trying to impose alien schemes of political and economic coexistence. The signing of this document is the best example of the will of Central Americans to achieve peace, reconciliation, development and justice, without external interference, within a framework of respect for their history and their goal of self-determination.

The Esquipulas II process entered upon its most direct stage of application last year, and its implementation has been the broad and timely support of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General, in document A/45/706 of 8 November this year, gives a precise account of this process.

The activities carried out by the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), the United Nations Observer Mission to verify the electoral process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN) and the International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV) are symbols of the praiseworthy work of our Organization in effectively co-operating in the efforts for peace and reconciliation and testify to the commitment of the United Nations to the will for peace of the Central American peoples. Our deep gratitude goes to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts, even in the face of particularly adverse situations, in response to the appeal made by the Presidents of the area.

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

What has been achieved has been extraordinary. What remains to be done is formidable. Progress continues to be made towards the total implementation of the Esquipulas II Agreements under the headings of security, verification and the control and limitation of weapons, in accordance with the Declaration of Antigua of June this year. Central America will thus continue to come closer to the goal of peaceful coexistence within a framework of security and stability.

Similarly, the work of CIAV is continuing in the area of assistance to those of the Nicaraguan resistance that are being repatriated and their incorporation into the productive activity of that country's society. The demobilization of the resistance and the great international effort in support of the Nicaraguan people to put an end to the civil war and to hold elections is not, unfortunately, all that is necessary to bring about reconciliation and reconstruction. Nicaragua, and the whole Central American region, will continue to call for the support and the assistance all members of the international community can offer.

It is to be hoped, in this connection, that the resources which in the past have been diverted to conflicts in the region will now go to the Governments that are responsible for reconstruction and promoting economic and social development in the Central American countries. It is alarming to note that this is not the case, and we observe with concern that there can be no lasting peace unless it is based on economic improvement. This is particularly true in the case of Central America, given its demographics and its age-old deficiencies.

To pursue efforts to achieve a negotiated agreement to the internal conflict in El Salvador will continue to remain a priority. The countries of the Group of Three have been following closely the evolution of the process of negotiation, and we have made known our readiness to support it.

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

We are grateful for the work done by the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, in the delicate process of consultations and dialogue designed to put an end to the armed conflict, promote democratization of the country, guarantee unrestricted respect for human rights and reunify the Salvadorian society. This is a gigantic task. The process of negotiation, whose first substantial achievement is the agreement on human rights, deserves our firmest support.

The future tasks of the United Nations require the disinterested support of the international community. In this undertaking we must act in strict compliance with the will of the parties, avoiding in any way impeding or attaching conditions to the assistance that will be required. Thus, we call upon the parties, with the active co-operation of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to remain open and flexible with regard to dialogue and compromise.

In Guatemala also there is progress towards national reconciliation, with the aim of achieving peace by political means. We hope that this process will go forward without impediment towards a peaceful solution to the long process of confrontation that has afflicted Guatemala. We welcome the willingness of the parties, as expressed in the Oslo Agreement, to embark upon activities that will generate the conditions in which peace and the strengthening of the democratic processes can be fully achieved.

We should like to highlight the need to progress towards the next phase provided for in the Oslo Agreement and initiate talks between representatives of the Government of the Republic and the leadership of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (URNG) designed to bring about a political solution to the armed internal confrontation. In the task entrusted to him of monitoring and guaranteeing the agreements and commitments entered into in the Oslo Basic

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Agreement, the Secretary-General will have the support and assistance of our three Governments. We wish to express our gratitude for the mediating presence of the Secretary-General, through his Personal Representative, for the purpose of creating a climate favourable to negotiations between the parties.

Within the framework of regional efforts to achieve solidarity and harmonization, the Group of Three will continue to support the efforts to bring peace and development to the Central American region. In this regard I should like to highlight the common commitment shown by the Presidents of Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico at their meeting as the Group of Three, in New York on 30 September. On that occasion the three Presidents expressed their willingness to intensify economic, cultural, scientific and technical co-operation, together and with the three countries of Central America and the Caribbean, in keeping with the postulates of the Declaration of Antigua, signed by the Presidents of Central America, and the Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The next day there was a meeting of the three Foreign Ministers of the Group of Three in Mexico City to discuss the modalities of the agreement reached by the Presidents.

Within the framework of that effort, we are promoting co-operation in the energy area involving the three countries and, specifically, studying the potential complementary factors in generating, connecting and distributing hydroelectric power, coal and gas in Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico and Central America.

In this way our three Governments reaffirmed their determined will for real, concrete co-operation with Central America, to achieve the much-desired peace within a framework of stability and development. The region has a common

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destiny and we are committed to guaranteeing that its direct beneficaries will be the peoples who have for so long suffered the havoc of war and the exhaustion of their economies. In Central America, and in more general terms in Latin America, another battle is being fought, the battle to build a future of well-being and development within a framework of stability and mutual respect, for the benefit of future generations.

Mr. TRAXLER (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Community and its 12 member States.

The Twelve are proud to share with the countries of the region under discussion many historical and cultural ties, which are deeply rooted. They are bound to Central American nations by common aspirations based on the principles of democracy and political pluralism, respect for human rights and international law, economic development and social justice.

The Twelve wish to reaffirm their strong commitment to a peaceful and lasting solution to the problems of Central America, which should be seen in the broader perspective of the social and economic context prevailing in the area. Indeed, some countries in the region have been suffering from a lack of sufficient respect for democracy and human rights, external intervention, border incidents, a high degree of violence and the massive flux of refugees.

Significant progress has nevertheless been achieved during the last few years. The mediation efforts of the Contadora Group and the Central American dialogue initiated by the Esquipulas Agreements have launched a regional peace process which has greatly contributed to peace and stability in the area and which the European Community and its member States fully endorse.

The Twelve agree that the best existing option for achieving a durable solution to Central American questions remains full compliance with the goals

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embodied in the Esquipulas II Agreement. They welcome and support the increasing involvement of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in the process that has helped in creating a new climate of confidence in the region.

The overall positive trend is encouraging, and the European Community and its member States commend the Central American nations for their perseverance in the implementation of the Esquipulas peace process and for their determination to build a regional framework for democratization, respect for human rights and social and economic co-operation. A number of Central American countries have taken significant steps along the path of national reconciliation and towards the full exercise of democracy. The Twelve whole-heartedly welcome these developments and are committed to supporting them. The Twelve underline the importance of free and fair elections in all countries of the region in conformity with the spirit of Esquipulas II.

The Twelve regard as a historic event the free and fair elections held last February in Nicaragua. The commendable manner in which the electoral process took place, the subsequent orderly transition to a new Government, and the agreements reached at Toncontin and Montelimar providing for voluntary demobilization, repatriation and relocation of members of the resistance constituted crucial developments in the reinforcement and consolidation of democratic institutions, the rule of law and national reconciliation in Nicaragua.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

Therefore the Twelve take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the United Nations Observer Group in Central America, the International Support and Verification Commission and the United Nations Observer Mission for the verification of elections in Nicaragua for their excellent work in carrying out their delicate and important tasks.

The Twelve hope that it will be possible, through the joint efforts of all parties involved, to continue to strengthen the process of national reconciliation in Nicaragua, thus creating the basis for a solution to the urgent economic and social problems of that country. The Twelve believe that the process of national reconciliation and democratization in Nicaragua should serve to encourage other countries of the region in which the dialogue between political forces has sometimes reached a delicate juncture.

In El Salvador we have seen the promising resumption of negotiations between the Government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), which has resulted thus far in the Geneva accord of 4 April 1990, the general agenda and schedule for a comprehensive negotiation process, issued in Caracas on 21 May 1990, and the human rights accord signed in San José on 26 July 1990. The Secretary-General's Personal Representative is playing an important role in the process, and in recent talks the parties have decided to place even greater emphasis on his active role as intermediary.

The Twelve hope that the negotiating process will gather new momentum and that, with the help of the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, it will attain its objective, as identified in the Geneva accord of 4 April 1990: that the parties will put an end to the armed conflict through political means as soon as possible, promote the democratization of the country, guarantee unrestricted respect for human rights and reconcile Salvadorian society.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

The Twelve note with serious concern, however, the continuing reports of human rights violations in El Salvador and urge all parties to spare no effort to improve the situation in this respect. In fact, the Twelve continue to attach great importance to the findings on the situation in that country of the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights.

One year after the assassination in El Salvador of six Jesuit priests and two of their assistants of the University of Central America, the Twelve express their grave concern at the absence of real progress in the area of judicial procedures and at the lack of co-operation from certain sections of the armed forces. The Twelve reiterate their conviction that a clearing-up of these cases, which constitutes a key factor for the consolidation of democracy and the independence of judicial power, should lead to a just and exemplary sentence for those responsible.

The Twelve follow with great concern the human rights situation in Guatemala and hope that a framework for strict respect for human rights will be created in the country. They attach great importance to the progress of the dialogue initiated in Oslo and continued in El Escorial, Ottawa and Quito between all political parties and social and economic forces and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), under the auspices of the National Reconciliation Commission and with the participation of the Secretary-General's Observer, with a view to achieving a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflicts in that country. The Twelve hope that the new Government and all parties concerned will support the dialogue initiated in Guatemala and contribute to its positive outcome.

Once again, the Twelve stress the importance of complying with the agreements subscribed to by the Central American Presidents in the Téla and San Isidro de Coronado summits for the promotion of peace, security and democracy in the region. They urge all irregular forces operating in the area to join the constitutional political process of their respective countries, and call upon Governments to

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

create suitable conditions for all parties involved to be able to exercise their political rights with full guarantees of their security.

The Community and its member States would like to recall that the Community budget for 1990 included a provision of $7.8 million to finance actions aimed at encouraging the democratization process in Central America. This includes, notably, measures to promote free and fair elections, as well as measures for the repatriation of refugees.

The positive developments in East-West relations, as well as the active involvement of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, have been instrumental in bringing about peaceful solutions to Central American problems. Nevertheless, the present achievements would not have been possible without the determination and political will of the peoples and countries concerned.

The European Community and its member States confirm their willingness to enhance in a concrete and effective manner their relations with Central American countries within the framework of the political and economic co-operation created by the San José ministerial conference held in Costa Rica in 1984 and thereafter pursued at annual meetings.

In welcoming the progress made in the political arena, the European Community and its member States believe that full attention must also be devoted to solving the economic and social problems of Central America. They view the endeavours of Central American States towards economic integration with particular sympathy. In this respect, the European Community and its member States underline the results of the Antigua summit of June this year. The European Community and its member States believe that the completion of the European single market in 1992 and the progress made in the integration of Central American economies will open new prospects that must be explored in order to make more fruitful the co-operation between the European Community and Central America.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

On the same lines, the European Community and its member States recall that since the sixth ministerial meeting the European Community has taken concrete steps, notably with regard to the Central American payment regional system, to increase its commitments for co-operation projects over and above the 1989 figure of $110 million and to participate in regional programmes in the tourism and fisheries sectors. The Twelve regard the seventh San José ministerial conference as a further opportunity for strengthening the political and economic dialogue.

In this connection, the European Community and its member States reaffirm their intention to contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Special Plan and Economic Co-operation for Central America as a way of assisting the efforts being made under the Esquipulas II Agreement. Furthermore, the European Community and its member States reiterate their decision to lend their technical and financial support to the process of establishing the Central American parliament, as regards both its material and technical organization and the holding of the electoral processes.

The Community and its member States once again express the hope that the ratification process of the Central American parliament will be concluded, in the light of the new political atmosphere of the region. The Twelve call upon the countries of Central America to continue their efforts to guarantee respect for human rights in that region. The Community and its member States reaffirm their intention to contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives set by the Esquipulas Agreements.

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): My Government welcomes the draft resolution under consideration on the situation in Central America, which we are pleased to co-sponsor. It provides us with an opportunity to reiterate our support for the Esquipulas II Agreement as the framework for an integrated and comprehensive peace process designed to bring democracy, security and development to all of Central America.

We recognize the historic importance of the Central American commitment made at Esquipulas in August 1987 to end civil conflict through negotiated political accords and national reconciliation. The United States favours that process and in the Security Council we have supported its development and the steps taken by the Secretary-General to move it forward. We fully support democratization and security brought about through a process of reconciliation characterized by good faith and willingness to negotiate by all parties.

Unfortunately, the conflict in El Salvador continues to be an obstacle to regional peace. My Government strongly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative to mediate a peaceful settlement to this complex and agonizing problem. We appreciate their work thus far and applaud the progress which has been made to date, especially the agreement on human rights.

We join in the call made in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution before us. Under that paragraph the Assembly

> "Requests the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional make every possible effort to carry out all the political agreements drawn up in Geneva and Caracas, bearing in mind, especially, the proposals to be presented by the Secretary-General in order to expedite the negotiation process and achieve as soon as possible a just and lasting peace in El Salvador." (A/45/L.19, para. 7)

(Mr. Watson, United States)

We recall that President Cristiani of El Salvador offered in his speech to the Assembly last month, a cease-fire to the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). My Government supports President Cristiani's offer, as have all the Governments of the region. We cannot overemphasize our willingness to support a cease-fire régime in El Salvador. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report on his efforts in this regard, and we reiterate our willingness to continue to lend our full efforts to advance this negotiating process.

In the Security Council, through the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), we have played a vital role in verifying certain security aspects of the Esquipulas II Agreement. We express our appreciation for ONUCA's efforts thus far and note that the Council may also be requested to play a role in verifying a possible settlement in El Salvador. We would strongly support such a role.

We also express our appreciation for the efforts of the International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV) and the United Nations electoral Observer Group in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), which were essential to advancing the peace process and the process of national reconciliation in Nicaragua.

We note the draft resolution's call for an increase in technical, economic and financial support for Central America. The United States has provided and will continue to provide such assistance. We have already joined in co-sponsoring the draft resolution on the special plan of economic co-operation for Central America currently before the Second Committee.

In addition, in Washington yesterday we convened, with extensive Central American and international participation, a meeting, which continues today, to discuss a partnership for development and democracy. This partnership for development and democracy is a companion to President Bush's "Enterprise for the Americas" initiative. It is a multilateral partnership to provide focused support

(Mr. Watson, United States)

for democracy and development in Central America. Its purpose is to mobilize international energy and resources to promote peace, democracy, economic opportunity and reform in the region. The partnership for development and democracy represents the framework for a long-term commitment by the United States and the international community to achieve the goals of Esquipulas.

While still incomplete, the vision laid down in August 1987 at Esquipulas has come far along the path to realization. In fact, the title of the agenda item for the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly might be more accurate if it were changed from "Threats to peace and international security" to "Progress towards realization of a durable and lasting peace in Central America". The primary credit for the remarkable advances in Central America belongs, of course, to the five Governments of the region, which have forged a unique and successful regional process to confront the problems which face their region. My Government is committed to continuing its full support for that process.

Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): A noteworthy feature of our times has been the revitalization of the role of the United Nations in solving a number of the most acute regional problems which had for many years been overshadowing the entire international situation, heightening tension and rivalry and bringing incalculable suffering to peoples which had fallen victim to confrontation and conflicts.

The process of reconstruction which has begun in the world based on the principles of new political thinking - balance of interests and freedom of choice - provides us with a historic opportunity to achieve a qualitative breakthrough in untangling the thorniest regional problems.

For many years the international community has been following the situation in Central America intently and with anxiety. There has always been an abundance of problems in that region. They have been produced by economic backwardness, social

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

injustice and methods of government based on the use of force. The situation has been made worse by interference from outside.

It now appears that developments in this region have taken a new and positive turn. In recent months very encouraging progress has been made in normalizing the situation in Central America, and that progress has been welcomed throughout the world with great satisfaction.

A genuine breakthrough in unblocking and then settling the Central American crisis required, first and foremost, the combined efforts of the States of that region themselves, the widespread support of the world community and the active involvement of the peace-making capabilities of the United Nations.

In that connection the substantial personal contribution of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, in securing the conditions for advancing the peace process in Central America deserves high praise. Effective solution of the problems which involved the United Nations in that region has been significantly furthered by the unanimity in the Security Council.

The Soviet Union welcomes the positive trends which have become evident in the settlement of the situation in Central America. For our part, we have sought to make use of every opportunity to promote a political solution to the problems that have accumulated, encouraging dialogue and creating external conditions conducive to bringing about a situation of trust and agreement in the region.

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

We have only to recall steps taken by our country - steps such as the cessation of military supplies to Nicaragua after 1988; the initiative, proposed by Mr. Gorbachev when he visited Cuba, on cessation of the supply of military matériel to Central America from anywhere at all; and the proposal that the Soviet Union and the United States give assistance to the Central American States to draw up and implement agreements on a reduction of armed forces and armaments in the region.

The initial results of the accelerating process of normalizing the situation in Central America are of major significance in themselves. With the active support of the United Nations, free elections were held in Nicaragua. The unique nature of this step was that it ensured the peaceful transfer of power, on the basis of freedom of choice in the region, where democratic institutions have been created through an authentic expression of will on the part of the people. In the past such efforts encountered considerable difficulties.

The activities of United Nations observers in Central America made it possible to stabilize the situation in Nicaragua and on its boundaries. The demobilization of opposition forces in Nicaragua has been virtually completed, and those forces have been disarmed.

At the same time, the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Central America contains the noteworthy conclusion that

> "While a major international effort gave the people of Nicaragua the opportunity to vote freely and brought an end to the civil war, the country unfortunately still faces a daunting task of reconciliation and reconstruction." (A/45/706, para. 18)

There is no doubt that a great deal remains to be done. First and foremost, the mission of the United Nations Observer Group has to be brought to its logical conclusion, in accordance with the mandate recently renewed by the Security Council.

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

In addition, efforts should be continued, through dialogue between the Government of El Salvador and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), to put an end to the armed conflict in El Salvador, which has become a new centre of regional tension, and to find ways and means of solving these problems on the basis of national reconciliation. It is important that we already have an agreed framework for such a dialogue. I refer to the Geneva Agreement between the parties - an agreement achieved with the assistance of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

On a broader and longer-term scale, we must pay great attention to, and provide major support for, the proposal to turn Central America into a zone of durable peace and stability and to initiate full-blown negotiations on matters related to the reduction of armed forces and armaments in the area. We in the Soviet Union have greeted the efforts being made by the Central American Governments finally to normalize the situation there, as well as the joint efforts to initiate steps that will reduce to the minimum the risk of a new escalation of armed confrontation arising in this, as yet untranquil, part of the world. We are open to further interaction with States in Central America and with all other countries concerned in the United Nations, in the search for a peaceful solution of outstanding problems and with a view to establishing in the region an atmosphere of mutual trust and co-operation.

In the opinion of the Soviet delegation, the draft resolution on the item before us that has been submitted by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States in document A/45/L.19 is well thought out and balanced. Its wording reflects the consensus that has emerged in this Organization with regard to support for the efforts of the countries of Central America to achieve in that region - with the active support of the United Nations, its Secretary-General and his

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

Personal Representative - durable and stable peace, democracy, security, co-operation and respect for human rights. The Soviet Union is ready to support this draft resolution.

Mr. NAGAI (Japan) (interpretation from Spanish): First, I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to pay high tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his ongoing efforts to find a peaceful solution to the problems in Central America. We have read his report with great interest, and we believe that it will be very helpful in our deliberations.

In the past year, thanks largely to the relaxation of East-West tensions, the international community has experienced far-reaching and dramatic changes. These changes are evident everywhere, including Central America. Indeed, at this time last year, when fierce fighting broke out in El Salvador, and when the situation with respect to the demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance and the impending election in Nicaragua was fraught with uncertainty, who could have predicted the positive developments that have taken place in the region?

Japan heartily welcomes this improved climate in Central America. It is a reflection of the political will of the leaders of the Central American countries and the parties concerned and of their firm commitment to a peaceful settlement, as well as of the dedicated efforts of the Secretary-General and members of the staffs of the relevant United Nations bodies. I should like to express to all of them my sincere appreciation of their valuable efforts.

Permit me now to review some aspects of the situation in Central America. I note with profound satisfaction that in Nicaragua, as a direct result of the free and fair elections held under the observation of the United Nations Observer Mission to verify the electoral process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN) and other international organizations, the transfer of power was effected peacefully. Furthermore, the demobilization and voluntary repatriation of members of the

(Mr. Nagai, Japan)

Nicaraguan resistance, carried out under the auspices of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) and the International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV), are now in the final stage. Having participated, by providing poll-watchers and by extending financial contributions for the verification and peace-keeping operations in Central America, Japan is particularly gratified that these United Nations bodies have successfully discharged their important tasks.

Turning to the situation in El Salvador, I am heartened by the intensive dialogue between the Government of El Salvador and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), which has been carried out under the auspices of the Secretary-General in accordance with the Geneva Agreement. My Government supports the valuable efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, in this regard. It hopes that both sides will overcome the very difficult issues that remain and will reach an agreement on a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

(Mr. Nagai, Japan)

In this respect, I share the Secretary-General's view that the United Nations should be ready to assume the tasks relating to the verification of a cease-fire, the monitoring of the electoral process and the verification of human rights, and trust that this eventual involvement of the United Nations will contribute to peace and political stability in that country.

My Government also welcomes the positive developments that have occurred in Guatemala in the course of the national dialogue. The presidential election held this month demonstrates the firm commitment of the Guatemalan people to the democratic process. I hope that Guatemala's democratic institutions will be strengthened and that the national dialogue will be successful in bringing about a peaceful solution of the nation's problems in the near future.

The problem of refugees and displaced persons - a tragic result of political instability - should not be neglected. Japan is pleased that increased international attention has been focused on this matter within the framework of the International Conference on Central American Refugees. Japan is contributing to the durable solution of this problem by extending financial and technical assistance through bilateral and multilateral channels.

As is the case in any complex situation, there are diverse views as to the root cause of the difficulties in Central America and how best to resolve them. There is no doubt, however, that the Central American crisis is the result of the economic and social difficulties that have traditionally plagued the region. History has proved time and again that it is not possible to attain peace and political stability if there is no economic and social development. Indeed, trying to achieve peace and stability in the absence of development and justice is as futile as building a castle in the sand. We therefore welcome the initiatives that the various United Nations bodies are undertaking under the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America.

(Mr. Nagai, Japan)

Seriously concerned that the current oil hikes and a possible global economic recession might reverse the progress made this year in the regional peace process, Japan is enhancing its economic co-operation with Central American countries. In addition to extending assistance to projects that address basic human needs and provide relief to refugees and displaced persons, Japan is ready to help those countries implement their debt-related structural-adjustment policies and improve their industrial and agricultural infrastructures. It is Japan's intention to continue to co-operate, to the best of its abilities, for the achievement of peace and development in the region.

Japan has high regard for the peace process set out in the 1987 Esquipulas II Agreement and supports every effort to promote it. As a result of the recent developments in Central America, there is now reason for optimism that the goals of peace and stability, as outlined in that Agreement, may soon be achieved. Of course, many challenges lie ahead. But I am confident that the peoples of Central America, through their steadfast political will and determined efforts, and with the support of the United Nations and its Member States, will in the near future be able to enjoy the fruits of their labours: peace, justice and economic and social development.

Mr. HASBI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): The Kingdom of Morocco which, although it is far away geographically, has close and historical relations with Central America - relations based on both cultural and historical ties - has repeatedly demonstrated its desire for a just and lasting solution to the problems of the region by actively supporting the peace process initiated by the countries of the isthmus in the context of the Esquipulas Agreements.

(Mr. Hasbi, Morocco)

During the past year much important progress has been made. The effects of the current international climate have definitely played a part in this progress but it should be emphasized that it has essentially been the efforts of the countries of Central America themselves, their determination and their resolve to pursue a regional dialogue which have made it possible for us today to be much more optimistic about the possibility of lasting peace and security.

During summits or other meetings - particularly those held in December 1989 in San Isidro, Costa Rica; last April in Montelimar, Nicaragua; and last June in Antigua, Panama - the Presidents of the five Central American countries reiterated their desire for a peaceful settlement of the disputes and the establishment of democracy in the region on the basis of the peace plan enshrined in the Esquipulas II Agreement.

My country pays a sincere tribute to the leaders of those countries for the political will they have so clearly demonstrated and assures them of its support for the efforts they are exerting to achieve peace.

I should also like, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, to congratulate the Secretary-General on the encouraging results which have been a constant feature of the peace process he is conducting in order to restore lasting peace to that region, particularly by establishing the appropriate machinery - namely, the United Nations Observer Mission to verify the electoral process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) and the International Verification and Follow-up Commission (CIAV).

In this connection, and in light of the very satisfactory way in which this machinery is operating, my delegation congratulates the Secretary-General and, through him, pays a tribute to the staff of the United Nations that has carried out, or is still carrying out, its tasks so efficiently, particularly in connection with the electoral process in Nicaragua.

(Mr. Hasbi, Morocco)

It should in fact be emphasized that the presidential elections in that country, held under the supervision of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, provided the opportunity for national reconciliation in a truly democratic framework.

(Mr. Hasbi, Morocco)

We note with satisfaction from the report of the Secretary-General on Central America that

"the people of Nicaragua were in a position to decide between alternatives which had been given a reasonable chance to be aired and would be free to determine their future government". (A/45/706, para. 5)

Further on in the same document we read the following:

"the voting had been conducted under normal conditions without intimidation or violence and could be considered free and fair." (ibid., para. 7)

In that same report of the Secretary-General we read that ONUCA, whose mandate has been extended, and CIAV have taken the measures necessary to facilitate the demobilization and disarming of the Nicaraguan resistance under satisfactory conditions and that this task, although delicate, has been carried out successfully, thus putting an end to a conflict which had 30,000 victims and unhappily did not spare one family in the country.

Thus, the Kingdom of Morocco can only welcome this happy outcome, having participated, with other States, by sending observers to monitor the elections, in this peace initiative in Nicaragua.

There has also been a positive outcome in El Salvador, where a process of negotiation under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) was initiated after the signing on 4 April 1990 of the Geneva Agreement between the Government of that country and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN); and where an agreement on human rights, containing detailed commitments to guarantee human rights in El Salvador and the creation of a United Nations fact-finding mission, was concluded in its final form in July of this year.

(Mr. Hasbi, Morocco)

The Kingdom of Morocco wishes to express its support for the Secretary-General's continuing his mission of good offices, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 637 (1989) and 654 (1990), in order to help resolve, in particular, the most delicate fundamental problem with regard to the situation in El Salvador, that is, the question of the armed forces.

The situation in Guatemala has also developed along satisfactory lines as a result of the signing in March of this year of the Oslo Agreement between the representatives of the Government of that country and a delegation from the opposition. That Agreement was described by the parties as a fundamental framework for efforts to bring about peace by political means.

This means that all the States of the region have finally accepted the idea of building together their road to peace and prosperity. We hope that the time will soon come when that effort will be crowned with success and those countries will be able to achieve the state of harmony and abundance to which they aspire.

The United Nations has played a decisive role in this rapid development of the situation in Central America. In this connection my delegation wishes to emphasize that in entrusting to the United Nations the performance of these difficult and complex tasks the international community has demonstrated its increased confidence in the peacemaking and peace-keeping functions of the Organization. My country is quite certain that the United Nations will continue to discharge successfully its responsibilites in this region in the quest for justice and equity. The international community for its part is called upon to ensure the successful outcome of the Secretary-General's mission by pledging its full support and co-operation.

Mr. ARROSPIDE (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): This Assembly is once again called upon to consider the situation in Central America. As the United Nations has broadened the area of its activities in this region, justifiable expectations have been aroused in respect of the delicate task assigned to the United Nations Observer Mission to verify the electoral process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) and the International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV).

The way in which the different stages of the electoral process in Nicaragua have developed, culminating in the peaceful transfer of power, attests to the democratic aspirations of Nicaraguans and their desire to begin, through agreement and dialogue, the delicate and complex process of political coexistence that will ensure the broadest possible participation of the citizens. It attests also to the excellent work accomplished by ONUVEN.

This peaceful transfer of power in Nicaragua, which we all welcome, would not have been possible without the implementation of a coherent plan for the demobilization and voluntary repatriation of members of the Nicaraguan resistance and their families. That is why I wish to reiterate my Government's gratitude to the International Support and Verification Commission and the United Nations Observer Group in Central America, which, in accordance with the initiatives and actions of the Secretary-General, carried out jointly and in a co-ordinated manner, in particularly difficult circumstances, the functions assigned to them.

In Nicaragua we have seen the completion of a cycle characterized basically by the urgent need to put an end to conflict through the co-ordinated efforts of all the parties involved and with the support of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. Now a new cycle is beginning in which the post-cold-war environment makes possible resolute international action aimed at

(Mr. Arrospide, Peru)

strengthening Nicaraguan democracy through substantive international co-operation aimed at the effective promotion of economic and social development.

The difficult situation in El Salvador can be seen now in hopeful terms because of the Agreement signed on 4 April in Geneva, in the presence of the Secretary-General, by the Government of that country and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. That agreement was designed to start a process that would put an end to armed conflict by political means and as soon as possible, promote the democratization of the country and guarantee unrestricted respect for human rights and the reunification of the Salvadorian society.

To this must be added the overall agenda and timetable for the complete process of negotiations that resulted from the Caracas meeting of 21 May 1990 and the intensive work that has been done both by the Secretary-General and by his Personal Representative, Ambassador Alvaro de Soto. Furthermore, the human rights agreement signed in San José, Costa Rica, on 26 July underscores the will of both parties to arrive at peace on the terms established at the Geneva meeting.

The process based on negotiation has begun and the United Nations has assumed a new task, which we hope will be successful. None the less it should be borne in mind that the primary responsibility, which cannot be transferred elsewhere, lies with the living forces of the Salvadorian society. In this respect peace in El Salvador, if it is to be a fruitful reality and not merely the temporary silencing of weapons, requires an unusual formula that involves the simultaneous renunciation of armed violence as a form of political expression and the eradication of anachronistic structures and painful injustices. This means that there must be the broadest possible participation of all sectors of the Salvadorian

(Mr. Arrospide, Peru)

civil society so that different views and opinions can break the chains of ideological antagonism and recalcitrant behaviour. My Government hopes that future talks will be able to overcome the misunderstandings that have prevented progress at the desired and necessary pace.

The establishment of representative democracy should not mean a kind of balance between the forces that have a capability to carry out armed action; nor should any one of those forces be preponderant in a new régime.

(Mr. Arrospide, Peru)

What is required, essentially, is the primacy of civil society represented in a Government able to assign new roles to the various components of the State and to defend those roles. Such efforts must be supported, because that is the only way in which the actions entrusted to this forum will succeed.

In this context, my Government welcomes the Basic Agreement for the Search for Peace by Political Means, signed in Oslo in March by the National Reconciliation Commission of Guatemala, acting with the full support of the Government of that country, and a delegation of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional, with the full support of its General Command. We are confident that this Agreement, as an expression of the parties' desire to negotiate, will make possible progress in national reconciliation, bringing a peaceful solution to the long process of confrontation that Guatemala has experienced.

We also believe it is important to emphasize the resolve of the Central American countries to avoid any temptation to resort to armed conflict. In this context, the Antigua Summit, held in June this year, agreed, among a number of important matters, to pursue negotiations on security, veri .cation and control and limitation of weapons, in accordance with the Esquipulas II Agreement, and to seek technical advice from the secretariats of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS). Work has proceeded at the desired pace, and we hope that we shall soon have a new model of security relations in Central America meeting the deepest wishes of its citizens.

The United Nations has the new and complex task of facilitating and helping to shape the most suitable scenario for all sectors of society to be able to contribute to redefining their means of domestic coexistence, so that civil society in Central America may achieve the shared objective of peace and development.

(Mr. Arrospide, Peru)

If the United Nations continues to help the peace process in Central America as it has been doing - that is, by bringing the parties to the conflict closer together, preventing needless loss of life and bringing about real international collaboration to solve the region's serious economic and social problems - it will have done what is expected of it. That is why Peru, which is closely linked to the Central American region and which has participated actively in the various negotiating forums, is a sponsor of the draft resolution submitted by the Central American countries and joins those who ask that it be adopted without a vote.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I wish to draw attention to the fact that in the ninth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/45/L.19 and in operative paragraph 4 the words "agreement on economic and social co-ordination" should read in the English version, "National Conciliation Agreement on Economic and Social Matters".

I also wish to state that Bahamas has joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/45/L.19, as orally revised. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt it?

Draft resolution A/45/L.19, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 45/15).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Assembly has thus completed this stage of its consideration of agenda item 28.

AGENDA ITEM 18 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

(a) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/45/23; A/AC.109/1015 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1016-A/AC.109/1021, A/AC.109/1023 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/AC.109/1024-A/AC.109/1036, A/AC.109/1038, A/AC.109/1041 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1044 and A/AC.109/1048 and Corr.1/Rev.1)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/644 and Corr.1)

(c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/45/23 (Part II) para. 26; A/45/L.16, A/45/L.17)

(d) DRAFT DECISION (A/45/L.18)

(e) REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (A/45/686)

Mr. SHAHEED (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): With a large number of Heads of State and Ministers attending, the people of Namibia celebrated the attainment of its independence, after 75 years of racist colonialism, on 20 March 1990. The extermination of large numbers of the Namibian people has availed the racist Pretoria régime nothing. The presence in Namibia of hundreds of foreign companies that plundered Namibia's wealth under the wing of Pretoria has availed that régime nothing.

While the independence of the Namibian people is a triumph for the desire for freedom throughout the world, and for all the countries and peoples that supported the struggle of the Namibian people, it is above all a crushing defeat for the racist South African régime and for all racist ideologies.

The current international détente between East and West undoubtedly contributed to the well-deserved triumphant conclusion of that struggle. However, that contribution alone could have never led to anything were it not for the faith of the Namibian people in its right to freedom and human dignity.

Namibia's independence gives cause for hope to all peoples suffering under the yoke of colonial persecution that they will be able to exercise their inalienable

(Mr. Shaheed, Syrian Arab Republic)

right to self-determination and independence. The important achievement of the people of Namibia should give an added momentum to the endeavours of the international community totally to eradicate colonialism in every shape and form before the end of the century.

We fully support the declaration by the United Nations of the 1990s as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. That declaration, made in resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988, which was opposed by only one major Power, was the result of the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement in a recommendation contained in the Final Document adopted by the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Nicosia in September 1988.

(Mr. Shaheed, Syrian Arab Republic)

We also support the preparation of a plan of action with the aim of freeing the world from colonialism by the beginning of the twenty-first century. In this regard a number of measures contained in the Plan of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration, which is annexed to General Assembly resolution 35/118, dated 11 December 1980, are as valid today as the day they were proposed. Their reaffirmation and effective implementation will have a far-reaching effect on the endeavour to eradicate the scourge of colonialism during the next decade.

There is nothing new in saying that in order to ensure the successful conclusion of the process of decolonization, it will be necessary, just as the General Assembly has reiterated several times, to ensure: first, the participation of the administering Powers and the representatives of the peoples of the Territories in the work of the relevant United Nations bodies; secondly, the dispatch of visiting missions from the United Nations to those Territories to verify on site the genuine aspirations of the inhabitants; and thirdly, the participation of the United Nations in all activities in those Territories as far as deciding their future status is concerned.

I would add that it is very important to request the administering Powers to halt forthwith the exploitation of the human and natural resources of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to refrain once and for all from using those Territories for strategic or political purposes and to withdraw their military installations from those Territories, as such installations pose a threat to the security of the colonial peoples and of neighbouring countries.

It is well known also that the Territories still under colonial domination have specific characteristics in terms of size, geographic location and population. We categorically reject the claims of those whose thinking is quite literally behind the times and who continue to insist that most of those

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Territories cannot survive as independent entities in the arena of international relations or that their current status reflects the will of their indigenous populations. There is a consensus that those characteristics should not impede the full implementation of the Declaration concerning those Territories - Territories which look forward to having their names deleted from the agenda of the Special Committee as soon as possible.

The growing international tendency to enable all peoples to exercise their right of self-determination cannot exclude the Palestinian Arab population which has been struggling for more than 36 months against Zionist occupation. The roots of the question of Palestine dates back to the mandate on Palestine. This fact puts a special responsibility on the international community vis-à-vis the crimes and daily massacres that are perpetuated in the occupied Arab territories.

The Palestinian Arab people is being subjected to the most horrendous spiteful and racist treatment. Dozens of them are being killed and injured daily and thousands are still in prison without any trial. Their only crime is that they seek to exercise their right to self-determination - a right which was affirmed by the United Nations 30 years ago as an inalienable right when it adopted the Declaration whose thirtieth anniversary we celebrated a few days ago.

The adoption by the Assembly in 1960 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was an historic step in the development of international law as far as self-determination is concerned. Although self-determination has been enshrined in the Charter as a principle, the Declaration of 1960 states that self-determination is the right of all peoples.

The march of freedom in the world is one. The struggle against colonialism and racism in all its manifestation is one -

Mr. TENNE (Israel): On a point of order, Madame President.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I remind members of rule 71 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

"During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with the rules of procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting. A representative who rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion."

I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. TENNE (Israel): I am sorry that I had to interrupt our colleague from Syria on a point of order, but he was deviating from the subject. I believe that the plenary Assembly is dealing this morning with item 18 of the agenda and is not concerned with any extraneous subject.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to continue his statement.

Mr. SHAHEED (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): I was saying that the adoption of this Declaration in 1960 was an historic step in the development of international law on the question of self-determination. Although the principle of self-determination is enshrined in the Charter, the 1960 Declaration states that self-determination is a right of all peoples.

The march of freedom in the world is one. The struggle against colonialism and racism in all its manifestations in the world is also one. Victory over racism and colonialism in all its manifestations anywhere in the world is a victory for all the freedom-loving peoples of the world who struggle for liberation.

(Mr. Shaheed, Syrian Arab Republic)

We reiterate our constant and unwavering commitment to the principles contained in the Declaration. We believe that these principles are still valid today, as they were in 1960 when the General Assembly adopted the Declaration. Our firm commitment to the right of peoples to self-determination is firmly demonstrated by my country's support for all the resolutions relating to this matter within the United Nations system.

(Mr. Shaheed, Syrian Arab Republic)

Our commitment to the right of peoples to self-determination is also demonstrated by my country's unswerving solidarity with all recognized liberation movements struggling to attain freedom and independence.

Those who would deny the free exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination and subject them to domination and exploitation should know that their conduct contravenes the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on human rights and the Declaration whose thirtieth anniversary we have just celebrated. We hope that before the end of this century all peoples, including those chafing under the yoke of colonial domination, will be given the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination and independence and accede to membership in the Organization together with the other free and sovereign Members of the United Nations.

With regard to what has been said by the representative of the racist Zionist entity, I can say that while self-determination is a principle set forth in the Charter, the Declaration itself states that self-determination is the right of all peoples of the world. That right, as with other rights, has existed even before the creation of that entity, which is represented here by an individual who pretended not to be aware of that fact.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. TENNE (Israel): It is a bit late, but I want to draw our Syrian colleague's attention to the fact that the official name of my country is Israel, not anything else. We are proud of the name "Zionist" and like to be called that, but the name of the country is different, and it is the custom in our Organization to refer to a country by its official name. Perhaps next time he will take cognizance of that fact.

Mr. TRINH XUAN LANG (Viet Nam): This year we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption on 14 December 1960 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. This historic Declaration, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), constitutes an important landmark, for over the past 30 years it has contributed to fulfilment of the aspirations of millions of peoples on earth to the attainment of the freedom and independence of their homelands. The Declaration is a corner-stone of the process of decolonization, since it makes clear that all nations, large or small, are entitled to self-determination and independence. Legally, it is a solemn manifesto of independence and freedom for all nations of the world, and therefore it has been and continues to be a source of inspiration and encouragement for those peoples who still remain under colonial domination to carry on their struggle for self-determination and independence.

On this special occasion let us take a retrospective look at the process of decolonization during the past 30 years. Since the adoption of the Declaration the world has witnessed one of the most remarkable developments of our time: 59 colonial and Non-Self-Governing Territories have exercised their right to self-determination and emerged as new States enjoying full independent and sovereign rights. The fact that more than one third of the 159 Members of the United Nations, former colonial Territories, have joined the Organization as sovereign States since 1960 is a vivid manifestation of this striking achievement.

The most recent example in this respect is that of Namibia, in that after so many years of sufferings and staunch struggle the Namibian people have gloriously gained their independence. The emergence of the new State of Namibia, which was immediately recognized by all the nations of the world, is obviously one of the most outstanding successes in the decolonization process. In this connection I

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should like to congratulate the brother people of Namibia once again on their splendid victory. I should also like to express our deep appreciation to the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for its perseverance in its task of monitoring the implementation of the Declaration.

While celebrating those achievements, we still bear in mind that the process of decolonization is yet to be fulfilled. There remain today on the Special Committee's list 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories that have not yet exercised their right to self-determination and independence and are subject to one form or other of colonial rule. Many obstacles on the road to the decolonization of those Territories remain to be cleared away. Among them are the unscrupulous exploitation of the natural resources of those Territories by foreign economic and other interests and the use of many of them for military purposes. This definitely cannot be accepted. Progressive mankind must strongly demand that the administering Powers contribute to the social and economic development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, dismantle their military bases and installations and promote the decolonization process. In that respect our attention and vigilance must definitely not be relaxed.

As we all know, despite our efforts, colonialism and neo-colonialism in all their forms and manifestations continue to exist in various parts of the world. Today, 30 years after the adoption of resolution 1514 (XV), we are still witnessing colonialism in its worst form in South Africa. The inhumane and abhorrent system of apartheid has not only deprived the members of the black majority of their right to self-determination but also deprived them of their basic human dignity.

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The international community should maintain sanctions against the racist régime of South Africa until the total dismantlement of the apartheid system is achieved, in conformity with the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, which was adopted by the General Assembly by its resolution S-16/1, of 14 December 1989.

The continued occupation by Israel of Palestinian and other Arab territories is another clear example of colonialism.

With regard to Western Sahara, we welcome the plan for a peaceful settlement there. We hope that the Saharan people will have the opportunity to express their free will, without coercion or pressure, with regard to the political future of their land. We also hope that the parties concerned will overcome existing obstacles and achieve a durable peace in that part of the African continent.

In keeping with its position of principle as a people that has had to go through a protracted and most arduous struggle and endure innumerable losses and sacrifices for its independence and freedom, the people of Viet Nam reaffirms its consistent and vigorous support for the peoples in South Africa, Palestine and elsewhere struggling for self-determination and national independence. The General Assembly adopted resolution 43/47, of 22 November 1988, declaring the period 1990-2000 the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. That was once again an expression of the determination of the international community to do away with colonialism and its remaining vestiges. We support this resolution and are committed to co-operating with the international community in the complete eradicating of the inhumane and abhorrent system of apartheid, racism and colonialism by the year 2000. We hope that with joint and concerted efforts the international community will work out a programme of action for the Decade with a view to achieving the lofty objective of the eradication of colonialism.

Mrs. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which was adopted on 14 December 1960, was the first document in which it was officially proclaimed that the subjection of peoples to foreign domination and exploitation was a denial of fundamental human rights, was contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and compromised the cause of world peace and co-operation.

The scope of the Declaration cannot be gauged simply by the number of countries which, directly or indirectly, owe to its principles their accession to or recovery of their independence. It can also be measured by the strong feelings of the international community whenever a people violates the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another people. For the Declaration is, above all, an expression of the universal conscience, which rejects colonialism as the denial of the right of peoples to make their own decisions and a denial of the fundamental human rights and freedoms that derive therefrom. Nothing should or can justify colonialism, which is an application of the barbaric law of the strongest.

Apart from humanitarian and liberal considerations, the Declaration is also the simple realization of the fact that in liberating peoples which have hitherto been subjugated the colonial Powers would guarantee peace and their own security, and in so doing ensure economic expansion and development.

The delegation of Madagascar notes with satisfaction that, after having taken stock of the question of decolonization on the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, the international community represented here, far from resting on its laurels, remains determined to finish what it started and root out the last vestiges of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

Despite the heavy toll in human life in liberation struggles, the balance sheet of decolonization is a positive one. The success of the Namibian process and

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the prospects for a peaceful settlement in Western Sahara reassures our Organization of the justice of the cause and the Declaration.

Nevertheless, we all know that colonialism has not yet been eradicated and the Organization's aim, which is to free the last Territories under colonial domination before the end of the century, will not be easy to achieve.

The Non-Self-Governing Territories on which our Organization must now focus its efforts during this last decade have, in spite of their disparities, something in common, in that for the most part they are islands with a small surface area, sparse populations and only limited natural resources. The climate, the natural beauty and the isolation of these Territories was a blessing for their populations before colonization. Our modern world has transformed those advantages into disadvantages, making them vulnerable to the installation of military bases, nuclear tests, the dumping of toxic waste, and the activities of drug traffickers. Tourism, which is often the basis of these islands' economies, has had a paradoxical effect. It has made the Territories known to the rest of the world, but at the same time the activities inherent in this industry have robbed the indigenous peoples of ancestral lands and reduced them to the role of passive observers in the economic process. Furthermore, the almost non-existent agriculture and the frequent cyclones make these islands highly dependent upon the administering Powers as regards food.

The policy pursued by the colonial Powers is aimed at keeping the Territories dependent on the metropolitan countries. The indigenous population receives inadequate education, or at any rate education mediocre enough to serve as a pretext for questioning its ability ever to govern itself and for excluding it from economic activities included in national accounting.

The inability of the indigenous peoples, which is created by the Administering Authorities, serves as an excuse for implanting settlers and immigrants, who, if

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they are integrated in the electoral body, will, in the case of a vote on independence, undoubtedly have an effect on the authenticity of the decision of the Territory concerned.

Exclusion of the indigenous peoples from the administrative and economic systems is also a way of keeping them unaware of their rights and of perpetuating colonialism.

This situation is a familiar one to our Organization, which for the past 30 years has spared no effort to remedy and successfully complete the process of decolonization in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

The seminars of Port Vila, in Vanuatu, and Bridgetown, in Barbados, last May and June respectively, provided an opportunity for a more thorough examination of the present situation and, above all, gave a new impetus to the work of the Special Committee. We support the Committee's decision to treat decolonization with greater flexibility from now on, taking into account the specific features of each Territory and the current situation in our changing world.

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Despite these innovations, there is one element which has remained unchanging: decolonization, if it is to be peaceful, cannot be achieved without the participation of the Administering Authorities themselves. It is my delegation's firm conviction that the authorities concerned - some of which actually sponsored the establishment of the United Nations - are perfectly well aware that maintaining their dominion over the populations of Territories runs counter to the principles they themselves laid down, principles of which to this day they consider themselves to be the defenders. Of course, there is no doubt that those who overlook the inalienability of priorities see no contradiction in such behaviour.

In any case, the spirit of the times is one of openness, dialogue and joint action. We hope that this spirit will permeate the process of decolonization and we urge the Administering Authorities to show the necessary political will through a series of steps aimed at preparing the indigenous peoples to take, without any fear or constraint, an informed decision on which the very future of their country will hinge.

An essential prerequisite for this process to be successful is updating the system of education and establishing training programmes to enable the indigenous peoples effectively to take over in due course. Furthermore, since the Administering Authorities wield all economic and financial power, they should make available those resources that are needed to develop the infrastructures that will make it possible for those Territories to overcome their geographic isolation and natural resource deficiencies. Here, we fully concur with the Special Committee, which has suggested developing means of transportation and diversifying production through the promotion of agriculture and modernizing fisheries.

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Another proposal we deem realistic is to allow the Territories to take part in the activities of cultural and economic regional groups and even to join them. Such contacts would open up a window to the rest of the world, marking a start towards ending marginalization while at the same time making the Territories aware of their afinity to a group, as well as of the uniqueness of their identity.

We appeal to the Administering Authorities to join in the work of the Special Committee and, in keeping with a recent suggestion by the Special Committee, facilitate the participation of indigenous representatives from the Territories in the activities of the Working Group.

Finally, we encourage them to provide regularly the information required under Article 73 e of the Charter, as well as to invite visiting missions to the Territories so that the United Nations can be properly informed on the situation in Territories and on the aspirations of the peoples concerned.

A favourite quip in the halls of the United Nations since the independence of Namibia is to ask members of the Special Committee of 24 whether they have not yet become unemployed. This can no longer be a joke when some delegations suggest, somewhat sarcastically, that the question of decolonization needs no longer appear on the General Assembly's agenda. I think that we can assert that the ambition of the members of the Special Committee of 24 - people of integrity who are devoted to the cause of decolonization - is precisely that they will see the day when, as recently occurred for the Council for Namibia, the Committee will be in a position to ask the General Assembly to dissolve it.

My delegation, for its part, would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its appreciation to the Special Committee and to the international community as a whole for what has been achieved in the process of decolonization and, through the Special Committee, we encourage our Organization to redouble its efforts to achieve

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the Decade's targets. Furthermore, my delegation would like to express its satisfaction to the Member States and the organizations that continue to provide educational and training scholarships to indigenous peoples in order to prepare them to administer their own countries after they have exercised their right to self-determination and independence.

We wish also to emphasize the paramount role which has been played and which should be played even more by the dissemination of information on the process. Locally, it can make the indigenous peoples aware of their right to self-determination and of the choices open to them under international law. Internationally, this would take the form of a campaign organized in co-operation with non-governmental organizations and help to alert public opinion.

Madagascar remains convinced that what is important is not independence at all costs but, rather, the genuine freedom of peoples to make their own choice. For that reason, we appeal to the Administering Authorities to prepare the peoples under their authority to make that choice. The French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, who was, inter alia, a philosopher, said: "There is no freedom unless it leads to something". We sincerely hope that one day the peoples in the Non-Self-Governing Territories will be free and that this freedom will lead them to economic development and the development of man's full potential.

Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria): The current debate on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples is taking place in an international environment marked by events of historic proportions. They are shaping an irreversible trend in international relations, namely, the gradual transition from the cold war to a new, more just, predictable and secure world order.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

No one could deny the importance of the Declaration for the successful process of political emancipation of peoples under colonial domination. Along with resolution 1514 (XV), it not only strengthened one of the basic principles of the Charter but also laid down a diversified foundation of practical options for its implementation.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

The thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, commemorated recently, is a proper occasion to make an overall assessment of the success and setbacks in the process of implementing it. This is even more important now, after the landmark achievement in the field of decolonization - the independence of Namibia. This significant event has brought us very much closer to the final goal of the total eradication of colonialism.

My delegation takes this opportunity to express its deep satisfaction at Namibia's peaceful transition to independence and to commend the people of Namibia for their courage and perseverance in the pursuit of their long-awaited and well-deserved freedom. We are convinced that Namibia's independence and the encouraging changes in South Africa will open prospects for creative co-operation and understanding among the countries of the region.

It is equally important to stress the unique involvement of the United Nations in Namibia, strengthened immensely by the détente in East-West relations and, particularly, the spirit of co-operation and compromise that guided all the parties concerned.

The history of decolonization is filled with both glorious and painful pages. Looking back at the achievements, the international community should take pride in its efforts and victories. As a result, the United Nations has been transformed into a universal and representative organization. Its activities have been enriched by the input of different political, philosophical and cultural ideas and traditions, thus promoting the drawing up of the criteria of common values and enhancing the search for and adoption of universally recognized norms of conduct in international interaction.

At the same time, we should never forget the suffering and deprivation of millions of peoples, whose only crime has been the desire to be free and live a decent life.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

This is not the time to point to the guilty. History will be the best judge. The international community has important positive tasks to accomplish. We, however, have enough proof now to confirm the belief that the ideological rivalry, the drive for monopoly of the truth and the respective imposition of social and economic models and concepts have not contributed to a more effective course in the decolonization process. The final winner will always be the human spirit, which, as President Bush rightly put it, "cannot be locked up for ever" (A/45/PV.14, p. 62).

Bulgaria has always actively and consistently participated in the joint efforts to achieve the complete elimination of colonialism, racism and apartheid. This has been in line with the founding principles of its foreign policy aimed at strengthening international peace and security and developing equitable and mutually advantageous co-operation between nations. We believe that many formerly subjugated peoples have benefited from our assistance and friendship.

It was in that context that my country welcomed General Assembly resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988, by which the period 1990 to 2000 was proclaimed the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. My delegation is of the view that the desire for dialogue, constructive co-operation and compromise that has been substituted for confrontation and rivalry creates favourable conditions for the successful completion of this task.

These new approaches are proving instrumental in the search for a solution to the question of Western Sahara. It is indeed significant that the General Assembly will adopt a consensus resolution on this issue for the second time. Bulgaria welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 658 (1990), endorsing the settlement plan of the Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity. We expect that the recent report of the

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Secretary-General will enable the Council to decide upon the way to implement the plan expeditiously.

My delegation is confident that the Matignon agreements will be consistently implemented, to the benefit of the people of New Caledonia. We are encouraged in that respect by the readiness of the French authorities to provide the United Nations with relevant information.

In our view, the process of dialogue and co-operation between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom, if strengthened and expanded to include confidence-building measures, could greatly facilitate the solution of the sovereignty dispute relating to the Falkland/Malvinas Islands.

Although the scope of the Declaration has now been significantly narrowed - it applies to only 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories - the commitment and dedication of the international community should not diminish. As to the approach to be taken to solving the remaining colonial problems, my delegation fully subscribes to the view of the Secretary-General that

"we must act with dispassionate objectivity, guided solely by the wishes and the well-being of the people directly concerned." (A/45/PV.29, p. 33)

Priority should be given to an intensified political education process that will increase those peoples' awareness of all the options open to them for the exercise of their right to self-determination. The administering Powers should consider further measures aimed at avoiding the depletion of the limited natural resources of the Territories and preserving the environment. It is my Government's position that the presence of military bases and installations in Non-Self-Governing Territories could constitute an impediment to the exercise of the right to self-determination. We believe, however, that the general improvement of international relations will gradually render the functioning of those bases and installations obsolete.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate my delegation's position, expressed during the debate in the Fourth Committee, on the need to rationalize and increase the effectiveness of the work of the Special Committee of 24. We also maintain the view that, following the independence of Namibia, the issues of apartheid should no longer be considered in those Committees. There exist a number of United Nations organs in which all aspects of apartheid can appropriately be dealt with.

My delegation is convinced that the adoption of a more adequate methodology in approaching the specific problems of each Non-Self-Governing Territory would have an important, positive impact on our ability to meet the concerns of its people. Along with the co-operation of the Administering Authorities, that will enable the international community to enter the new century free from colonialism.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.